



REPORT TO: SPECIAL MORAY COUNCIL ON 3 MARCH 2020

SUBJECT: MORAY FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks Council to note progress on preparation of a food growing strategy, to agree responses to the comments received during public consultation and to approve the strategy as supplementary guidance.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section II (13) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the approval of council reports and strategies of a corporate nature.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council agree:-

- (i) the responses provided to the comments received during the public consultation on the Draft Food Growing Strategy set out in Appendix 1;
- (ii) to approve the final version of the Food Growing Strategy set out in Appendix 2, and for it to be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for food growing spaces; and
- (iii) to delegate responsibility for Section 119 and 120 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Food Growing Strategy to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee and to make the necessary changes to the Scheme of Administration.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Section 119 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which came into operation in April 2018, places a duty on every local authority to prepare a Food Growing Strategy which must be published by 1 April 2020.
- 3.2 In August 2019, Council agreed to issue the Draft Food Growing Strategy for consultation and to decide on the delegation of responsibility for Section 119

and 120 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 following consideration of this report (para 6 of the minute refers).

- 3.3 The strategy was issued for public consultation for 8 weeks. Three consultation events were hosted and were well attended with over 145 people coming along. A free community lunch was hosted in partnership with the Buckie Monitoring Group and family friendly events hosted in partnership with REAP in Elgin and Forres.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 4.1 36 consultation responses were received and a summary of key issues raised is set out below.
- Strong support for a food growing strategy, in particular teaching young people to grow their own food and cook with it.
 - Queries over funding to deliver the identified food growing sites. See section below relating to delivery of the strategy.
 - Lack of support for a food growing sites at Grant Park and Drumduan Road in Forres. The views of the community have been taken into account and these sites are no longer being promoted for food growing within the strategy.

Detailed responses to the comments received are set out in **Appendix 1**.

Feedback

- 4.2 Feedback was sought from people attending the consultation events and 14 responses were received. On the whole the responses were very positive, 93% of respondents strongly agreed they found the exhibition materials very useful in explaining the food growing strategy. 100% of respondents strongly agreed staff manning the exhibitions were very knowledgeable and helpful and 71% of respondents strongly agreed they were now more informed about community food growing.

5. DELIVERING THE FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

- 5.1 Within the strategy a network of food growing spaces are identified across towns and villages in Moray. Upon adoption the strategy will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications supporting Policy EP5 Open Spaces in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020.
- 5.2 The strategy acknowledges financially the Council is not in a position to invest in the delivery of the identified allotment sites. Instead the Council will play an enabling role offering mainly non-financial support to help community groups take forward sites. For example there is an action within the strategy to prepare an online tool providing advice and signposting communities to resources.

- 5.3 The development of pilot food growing projects working with partner organisations linked to Locality Plans for New Elgin East and Buckie Central East is an identified action. A new community garden has recently been established at New Elgin Hall with support from a number of organisations including the Council's Criminal Justice team who cleared the site. There is interest in expanding food growing at the Phoenix Centre in Buckie linked to health and wellbeing. Beyond this the Council will look to support food growing projects through advice, youth engagement and other opportunities as they arise.

6. REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY

- 6.1 The working group will continue to meet twice yearly to oversee the implementation of the identified actions within the strategy. There is a requirement to review and update the strategy every five years. Annual monitoring will be undertaken and reported to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee as part of wider Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report. This will provide an update on progress on the identified actions. A key measure of success will be the increase in the number of food growing spaces actively being used across Moray.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

A Food Growing Strategy can help to address the 4 priorities set out in the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires all local authorities in Scotland to prepare Food Growing Strategies by 1 April 2020.

(c) Financial implications

There may be financial implications arising from delivery of the strategy, which will be considered against existing budgets.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a reputational risk of not complying with legislation if the Council does not prepare a Food Growing Strategy by 1 April 2020.

(e) Staffing Implications

Preparation of the strategy has involved officers from Strategic Planning and Development, Estates, Lands and Parks, Contaminated Land, Transportation, Flood Risk Management and the Community Support Unit. There will be continued staff resources required to implement and review the strategy to comply with legislation involving primarily officers from Strategic Planning and Development.

(f) Property

The strategy identifies potential food growing areas on Council owned land. All sites have been subject to consultation with the Estates Manager.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and concluded there is no potential for discrimination as a result of the strategy.

The delivery of food growing spaces across Moray can assist the Council in tackling socio-economic inequalities by increasing access to affordable fresh food. There are also identified benefits in helping to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities, by promoting physical activity and a healthy diet. It is recognised that food growing can also have positive impacts on mental health, dementia and loneliness.

(h) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive: Economy, Environment and Finance, the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Tracey Sutherland (Committee Services Officer), the Head of Financial Services, the Estates Manager, the Lands and Parks Officer and the Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and the comments received have been incorporated into the report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty upon all local authorities in Scotland to prepare a Food Growing Strategy by 1 April 2020.**
- 8.2 The strategy aims to support an increase in the number of food growing spaces across Moray and will be used as a material consideration in determining planning applications for food growing sites.**

Author of Report: Emma Gordon, Planning Officer
Background Papers:
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